

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9127

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7032

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TAGS: PINT/CO

SUBJ: GENERAL ROJAS PROCLAIMS DAUGHTER AS ANAPO CANDIDATE

1. DURING AN ANAPO RALLY AT THE NATIONAL CAPITOL, PARTY LEADER GEN ROJAS PINILLA PROCLAIMED HIS DAUGHTER MARIA EUGENIA ROJAS DE MORENO AS THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY

2. DURING A MEETING OF ANAPO LEADERS AT THE NATIONAL CAPITOL ON AUG 25 GEN ROJAS GAVE UP HIS OWN CANDIDACY IN FAVOR OF THAT OF HIS DAUGHTER, MARIA EUGENIA. IN HIS SPEECH THE GEN PAID TRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN OF COLOMBIA AND POINTED OUT THAT HIS PROCLAMATION OF HIS DAUGHTER WAS TAKING PLACE ON THE NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN DURING HIS REGIME. (ALTHOUGH THE WOMEN GOT THE VOTE UNDER ROJAS, THEY DID NOT IN FACT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE THEIR FRANCHISE UNTIL AFTER THE GENERAL LEFT POWER.) THE GEN SAID HIS DECISION WILL BE PUT BEFORE A NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ANAPO TO BE HELD IN BOGOTA ON OCT 11.

3. THE GEN'S ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN EXPECTED. A NUMBER OF ANAPO LEADERS HAVE BEEN WORKING ON HIM EVER SINCE MARIA EUGENIA RETURNED TO THE COUNTRY LATE IN JUNE TO GIVE HIS BLESSING TO HER. THE GEN RESISTED ALL ARGUMENTS FOR SOME WEEKS BUT FINALLY SUCCEEDED TO REPORTS FROM THE PARTY LEADERSHIP THAT ANAPO WAS DIS-INTEGRATING AT THE LOCAL LEVELS FOR LACK OF A CANDIDATE AND

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STRONG LEADERSHIP. ROJAS KNOWS HE CANNOT CAMPAIGN VIGOROUSLY

AND ACCEPTED RELUCTANTLY THE FACT THAT ONLY SOMEONE IN GOOD HEALTH WILL BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE RIGORS OF APRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN THAT STILL HAS OVER EIGHT MONTHS TO RUN. TALL AND TRIM AT 130 POUNDS, DOWN FROM 190 A YEAR AGO, AND WITH THE DAMAGE TO HER SPINAL COLUMN REPAIRED, MARIA EUGENIA LOOKS AND ACTS READY TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT. SHE HAD A REMODELING JOB DONE ON THE FAMOUS ROJAS JAW SHE INHERITED FROM HER FATHER AND HENCE LOOKS SLIGHTLY, BUT ONLY SLIGHTLY, LESS PUGNACIOUS THAN IN THE PAST. IN A CONVERSATION ON AUG 22 WITH THE CHARGE AND POLIT COUNSELOR SHE SAID SHE HOPED HER FATHER WOULD PROCLAIM HER CANDIDACY BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT EVERYONE WAS HOLDING HIS BREATH FOR FEAR THE GEN WOULD CHANGE HIS MIND AGAIN. IN OUR CONVERSATION MARIA EUGENIA SHOWED A GOOD GRASP OF THE ISSUES AND THREW STATISTICS AROUND WITH GREAT FACILITY. SHE SAID THE PARTY'S GREATEST HANDICAP THE LACK OF A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, WILL SOON BE OVERCOME, DESPITE GOVT HARASSMENT AND SABOTAGE.

4. VERY GREAT PRESSURES WERE PUT ON THE GENERAL TO MAKE HIM GIVE UP HIS OWN CANDIDACY. HE HAS TOLD THE POLIT COUNSELOR ON REPEAT OCCASIONS SINCE

THE 72 LOCAL ELECTIONS IN WHICH ANAPO DID SO POORLY THAT MARIA EUGENIA JUST DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH OF A REPUTATION TO BE ABLE TO CARRY THE ANAPO STANDARD IN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. AGAIN THE GEN IS VERY SUSPICIOUS OF MARIA EUGENIA'S HUSBAND, SAMUEL MORENO, WHOM HE MISTRUSTS AND SUSPECTS IS LESS INTERESTED IN VINDICATING THE FAMILY NAME THAN IN PROMOTING HIS OWN INTERESTS. BUT PARTY LEADERS HAVE BEEN POUNDING INTO ROJAS THESE PAST MONTHS THAT ANAPO IS FOUNDERING AND UNLESS STRONG MEASURES ARE TAKEN THERE WILL BE NO BASE LEFT WITHIN A SHORT TIME. SOME TOP ANAPO POLITHIANS HAVE TOLD US THEY WERE CONSIDERING BOLTING THE PARTY UNLESS THE ORGANIZATION COULD BE REINVIGORATED. STILL ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE PRESSURES ON THE GEN WAS THAT WITH MARIA EUGENIA AS A CANDIDATE THERE IS NO CHANCE ANAPO WILL BE LEFT AT MID CAMPAIGN WITHOUT A LEADER; THERE IS A GROWING FEAR THE GEN WILL EXPIRE BEFORE LONG AND THE LEADERSHIP DID NOT RELISH THE PROSPECT OF TRYING TO TRANSFER THE MANTLE TO HIS DAUGHTER AFTER HE DIED. THIS WAY, THERE IS SOME HOPE THE GEN CAN PASS ON TO HIS DAUGHTER THE VOTES THAT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HIS ALONE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THEY CANNOT BE PASSED TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT A ROJAS; IT IS EVEN DOUBTFUL THE SWITCH CAN BE MADE TO A ROJAS. FINALLY, WITH MARIA

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EUGENIA AT THE HELM, ANAPO IS MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE IN ITS DEALINGS WITH OTHER PARTIES AND MANY INTER PARTY DISCUSSIONS ARE BEING HELD WITH AN AIM TO GETTING ANAPO VOTES IN RETURN FOR PROMISES OF ANAPO PARTICIPATION IN THE NEXT ADMIN, OR EVEN THE SELECTION OF MARIA EUGENIA AS DESIGNADA (VICE PRES). THESE PROBINGS HAVE LED NOWHERE AND NO DECISIONS WILL BE MADE FOR SOME MONTHS, BUT THE MAIN CONSIDERATION HERE IS THAT MARIA EUGENIA, UNLIKE HER FATHER, IS A FRIEND OF BOTH THE LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES. THERE IS ALMOST NO CHANCE MARIA EUGENIA
CAN WIN THE PRESIDENCY AND THE CLOSER WE ARE TO THE ELECTIONS
THE GREATER THE TEMPTATION TO MAKE A DEAL WITH ONE OF THE OTHER
PARTIES, IF THE GENERAL HAS PASSED FROM THE SCENE BY THAT TIME.
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